Raul Castro Says Cuba Is Ready To Join U.S. at Bargaining Table

SANTIAGO, Cuba, July 21 (AP)—Cuba is ready to meet the United States at the bargaining table "anywhere, anytime and discuss whatever would be necessary" to iron out problems between the two nations, Armed Forces Minister Raul Castro said today.

But for such a possible reconciliation move to succeed, Castro said, "there must be no previous conditions demanded" by each country.

In Washington, the State Department declined comment on Castro's statements.

Castro was asked in a news conference with foreign newsmen if this meant Cuba would abandon the five points set forth by his brother, Premier Fidel Castro, in the October, 1962, missile crisis, as essential conditions to be met prior to any negotiations.

Raul answered, "I repeat that if we would have negotiations, they would have to be without any previous conditions."

Visited Town Near Base

Fidel Castro has demanded American withdrawal from Guantanamo Naval Base, suspension of surveillance flights, suspension of aid to "internal subversion," lifting of the economic blockade, and suspension of "agressive incursions again Cuba."

The younger Castro invited a group of foreign correspondents yesterday to fly with him to Guantanamo, the Cuban town about 20 miles from the U.S. base.

Castro took the newsmen to a funeral for a Cuban soldier, Ramon Lopez Pena, who the Cuban government charged was killed by U.S. Marines on sentry duty at the Guantanamo border Sunday night.

Later the group went to Santiago and Castro spoke with newsmen until early this morning.

At the Guantanamo cemetery, Castro referred to the soldier's death and said there are some "circles in the United States conducting an aggressive and adventurous policy against Cuba."

Castro said there was an interest in provoking Cuba into an armed attack on the base but said Cuba will "continue its current policy of abstaining from the use of force against the base."

Castro's speech was surprisingly mild and appeared to reflect the new attitude of his brother, who recently expressed willingness to seek an accommodation with the United States.

The purpose in "goading Cuba" is to force President Johnson to declare war on Cuba, Castro declared. He said if the President did not, "he would be supplying (Sen. Barry) Goldwater with his best card."

Castro said Cuba did not consider President Johnson responsible for Guantanamo border incidents but blamed those "infiltrated reactionaries" which he said were in the Johnson Administration.

The U. S. State Department has denied that a Marine killed the Cuban soldier. The Department said an investigation by the base commander indicated that Marines, provoked by shots from a Cuban guard post, fired one shot over the heads of the Cuban sentries. However, the report said, observation of the Cuban guard post indicated that no one was hurt.

Denies Cubans Fired

Raul denied the State Department claim that Cuban soldiers had fired upon American sentries.

"We do not need to do this," Castro said. "If we would wish to provoke the United States, we would simply use one of the rockets we have and shoot down a U-2 plane."

Castro said his brother's offer to withdraw Cuban watchposts 100 yards to a point 150 yards from the Guantanamo border still stands and said in fact "some posts have already been moved back."

During his Santiago interview he rejected a State Department demand that Russian soldiers be withdrawn from Cuba as a condition for negotiations.

"The American Government is not entitled to impose conditions upon us. We like Soviet soldiers," Castro said.

In his speech last night, he asked the audience whether they wanted Soviet troops to leave and they shouted in reply "no." He asked whether they wanted the United States to withdraw from Guantanamo and the crowd shouted "yes."